

State of Wisconsin\Government Accountability Board

Post Office Box 2973
17 West Main Street, Suite 310
Madison, WI 53701-2973
Voice (608) 266-8005
Fax (608) 267-0500
E-mail: gab@wisconsin.gov
<http://gab.wi.gov>



JUDGE THOMAS CANE
Chair

KEVIN J. KENNEDY
Director and General Counsel

Enabling Qualified Homeless Individuals to Vote

Wisconsin's election law embodies a commitment to facilitate voting for all qualified individuals, including those who happen to be homeless at the time of the election. The information in this memorandum is designed to facilitate participation of qualified individuals while protecting the integrity of the electoral process. It is essential that all qualified Wisconsin electors be provided with the opportunity to help choose the elected governmental representatives who develop and implement policies that affect them.

Any United States citizen aged 18 or older who is not otherwise disqualified may vote in Wisconsin if he or she meets the statutory residency requirements. Qualified individuals must have lived in Wisconsin for at least 10 days. These persons must have an identifiable location that they consider their residence for voting purposes and to which they intend to return, when absent.

Homeless individuals may designate a fixed location for their residence for voting purposes if it is an identifiable location in the state of Wisconsin which could conceivably serve as a temporary residence. This location may be a homeless shelter, a park bench, or other location where a homeless individual may spend time or return to when absent.

A homeless individual may claim a shelter for the homeless as his or her residence for voting purposes, notwithstanding any restriction in the shelter's rules prohibiting its use as a residence address. "Residence" for voting purposes is distinct from other types of residence.

In order to establish that a person without a traditional residence is a qualified elector, the person needs to produce a form of identification with his or her name and residence for voting purposes. This form of identification may include a letter from a shelter for the homeless or from a private or public school service organization providing services for homeless individuals. The letter identifies the individual and describes the location designated as the person's residence for voting purposes. The identification letter should be on letterhead and signed by a person affiliated with the social services organization.

If a homeless individual cannot produce a letter of identification, the person may bring a witness to the polling place who is a qualified elector in the municipality. That elector must provide identification indicating that he or she is a qualified elector in the municipality, and provide a sworn affidavit of identification for the homeless person, pursuant to the provisions of §.6.55(2)(b), Wis. Stats.

Local election officials or persons working to facilitate voting for qualified homeless individuals may contact the Government Accountability Board - Elections Division staff at 608-266-8005 or at gab@wi.gov with questions.

On Social Service Agency Letterhead

Date

Dear Local Election Official:

This document serves as a letter of identification for this individual who does not have a traditional residence for voting purposes.

Name of Individual: _____

Brief description of individual including age, height, weight, color of hair and color of eyes:

Brief description of individual's residence for voting purposes:

As a person affiliated with (*the organization indicated on this letterhead*), I certify that I know this individual. I know the name of the individual in this letter of identification. I know that the location described as this person's voting residence is a place frequented by this individual.

This letter of identification is provided to enable the individual named to participate in the election process.

signature

title